

Mike Parson

Michael L. Parson (born September 17, 1955) is an American politician and former law enforcement officer who is the 57th Governor of Missouri, having taken office on June 1, 2018, following the resignation of Eric Greitens. Parson had been the 47th Lieutenant Governor of Missouri.^[1] He is a member of the Republican Party. From 2005 to 2011, he served in the Missouri House of Representatives, representing the 133rd district. Following that, from 2011 to 2017, he served in the Missouri Senate, representing the 28th district. He was the majority caucus whip in the Senate during the 96th General Assembly.^[2]

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Early life, education, and work

Parson was born on September 17, 1955, in Wheatland, Missouri, and raised on a farm in Hickory County. He graduated from Wheatland High School in 1973.^[3]

Mike Parson



57th Governor of Missouri

Incumbent

Assumed office

June 1, 2018

Lieutenant Mike Kehoe

Preceded by Eric Greitens

47th Lieutenant Governor of Missouri

In office

January 9, 2017 – June 1, 2018

Governor Eric Greitens

Preceded by Peter Kinder

Succeeded by Mike Kehoe

Member of the Missouri Senate from the 28th district

In office

January 5, 2011 – January 4, 2017

Preceded by Delbert Scott

Succeeded by Sandy Crawford

Member of the Missouri House of Representatives from the 133rd district

In office

In 1975, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, and over six years served two tours in the Military Police working up to sergeant.^[4] While in the Army, he attended night classes at the University of Maryland and the University of Hawaii, without completion of a degree.^{[3][5]}

Following his military service, in 1981, he returned to Hickory County to serve as a deputy. In 1983, he transferred to the Polk County Sheriff's Office to become its first criminal investigator. He purchased his first gasoline station, "Mike's", in 1984. The following year he started a cow and calf operation, becoming a third-generation farmer.^[4] Parson served 11 years as Polk County sheriff before being elected to the Missouri House of Representatives in 2004.^[6]

Missouri Legislature

Parson was first elected to the 133rd District in the Missouri House of Representatives in 2004.^[3] He was subsequently re-elected in 2006 and 2008. In 2007 Parson co-sponsored a bill to expand Castle doctrine rights.^[7]

In 2010, Parson was elected to his first term in the Missouri Senate.^[8] He had signed the Americans for Tax Reform pledge not to raise any taxes.^[9] He won re-election in 2014, running unopposed in both the primary and general election.^[10]

Committee assignments	Title	Years(s)
Small Business, Insurance and Industry	Vice chair	2011–2014
	Chair	2015
Agriculture, Food Production and Outdoor Resources	Vice chair	2011–2012
Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight	Chair	2013–2014

Lieutenant Governor of Missouri

Campaign

Parson initially announced he would run for governor in 2016, but opted to run for lieutenant governor instead.^[11] After defeating two opponents in the Republican primaries, he faced Democratic former U.S. Representative Russ Carnahan, whom he defeated in the general election on November 8, 2016.^[4]

During his campaign, Parson was criticized by his former chief of staff for allegedly proposing legislation on behalf of a lobbyist and a \$50,000 plan to employ a valet for his vehicle. Parson claimed his former staffer was a "disgruntled former employee".^[12]

January 5, 2005 – January 5, 2011	
Preceded by	Ronnie Miller
Succeeded by	Sue Entlicher
Sheriff of Polk County	
In office	
1993–2005	
Preceded by	Charles Simmons
Succeeded by	Steven Bruce
Personal details	
Born	September 17, 1955 <div> <u>Wheatland, Missouri, U.S.</u></div>
Political party	<u>Republican</u>
Spouse(s)	Teresa Parson (m. 1985)
Children	2
Residence	<u>Governor's Mansion</u>
Website	<u>Government website</u> (http://governor.mo.gov)
Military service	
Allegiance	 <u>United States</u>
Branch/service	 <u>United States Army</u>
Years of service	1975–1981
Rank	<u>Sergeant</u>

Tenure

Parson was sworn in along with Governor Eric Greitens on January 9, 2017. Noting that the Lieutenant Governor's office had not been upgraded in the past 12 years, Parson approved \$54,000 in remodeling and renovation costs within his first two months.^[13]

In 2017 Parson sought a \$125,000 increase to his \$463,000 budget, which included \$35,000 to reimburse him for travel mileage during state business. He also sought \$10,000 for out-of-state travel.^[13] In 2018 he asked for an additional \$25,000 to pay for a part-time personal driver but decreased his overall budget request to \$541,000. In response to criticism, his office has routinely stated that his office and salary is the smallest of any statewide elected Missouri official.^{[14][15]}



Parson with Sonny Perdue in 2017

In August 2017 multiple outlets reported that Parson was the only statewide elected official to accept gifts from a lobbyist. During his run for governor, Greitens called for a prohibition on lobbyist gifts. Parson's predecessor, Peter Kinder, also accepted gifts.^{[16][17]}

Following the allegations of improper care at the Missouri Veterans Home in St. Louis, which were first reported by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in October 2017, Parson's office immediately launched an investigation.^{[18][19]}

On February 22, 2018, Greitens was indicted on felony invasion of privacy charges.^[20] The indictment came a month after Greitens disclosed an extramarital affair, which only increased speculation that Parson could succeed Greitens should he step aside or be removed.^{[21][22]}

Low income housing tax credit industry

On December 19, 2017, Parson voted to keep a controversial \$140 million state tax credit intended for developers of low-income housing.^[23] Governor Eric Greitens had appointed members to the Missouri Housing Development Commission that opposed the tax credit program. Greitens had publicly called the low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program, "a special interest scheme that makes insiders rich."^[23] Parson and then-state treasurer Eric Schmitt were the only members to vote in favor of keeping the tax credit. Prior to the commission's vote, Greitens had publicly opposed the tax credit, following a bi-partisan audit of the program that showed that only 42 cents of every dollar were being spent on low-income housing.^[24] Following Greitens resignation in 2018, Parson initially stated that as Governor, he had no plans to restart the tax credit.^[25] Since, Parson has appointed Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe, State Treasurer Scott Fitzpatrick, and Attorney General Eric Schmitt, all members of the commission.^[25] In May 2019, Parson announced his intention to restart the low income housing tax credit program.^[26] Parson also announced that he was considering calling a legislative special session to restart the tax credit program.^[26] The Columbia Tribune published in 2017, "State Treasurer Eric Schmitt and Lt. Gov. Mike Parson, both Republicans, among the top 10 Republican recipients of developer contributions over the past 10 years."^[27]

Governor of Missouri

On May 29, 2018, Governor Eric Greitens announced that he would be resigning, effective at 5 p.m. on June 1, 2018. Parson was sworn in half an hour later as Governor of Missouri.^[28]

Appointments

On June 18, 2018, Parson appointed fellow Republican Mike Kehoe, Missouri Senate Majority Leader, as Lieutenant Governor. The appointment came with legal uncertainty, as the Constitution of Missouri states that the governor can fill all vacancies "other than in the offices of lieutenant governor, state senator or representative, sheriff, or recorder of deeds in the city of St. Louis". However, Parson stated that he believed that the Constitution gave him authority to tap Kehoe as lieutenant governor.^{[29][30]} On June 19, 2018, the Missouri Democratic Party filed a lawsuit in an attempt to undo Kehoe's appointment.^[31] The Democrats lost their lawsuit in the Cole County Circuit Court due to a lack of standing and the vagueness of the state law which states it cannot be done but does not provide a process to fill the position. Oral arguments were heard on November 7, 2018.^{[32][33]} On April 16, 2019, the Missouri Supreme Court ruled that the appointment was legal.^[34]

Parson appointed Lynn Parman, Jay Wasson, and Christopher Waters to the Missouri State University board of governors. Aside from the appointment of Kehoe, Parson inherited the same administration as his predecessor Eric Greitens had left.^[35]

Policy

In December 2018, Parson proposed repealing a voter-approved constitutional amendment to establish nonpartisan redistricting of state House and Senate districts. The Associated Press estimated that a nonpartisan redrawing of districts would likely increase Democrats' share of state House and Senate seats. At the same time, Parson expressed support for making it harder to put issues up for ballot referendum.^[36]

On January 16, 2019, Parson delivered his first State of the State Address to a Joint Session of the 100th Missouri General Assembly, and his speech focused on two core priorities, workforce development and infrastructure.^[37]

In April 2019, Parson was given a Person of the Year award by the Missouri Association of Workforce Development for his related efforts across the state.^[38]

Abortion

On May 24, 2019, Governor Parson signed bill HB 126, known as the Missouri Stands for the Unborn Act, criminalizing abortions in the state of Missouri after eight weeks of pregnancy. Under the law, any person who performs an abortion after eight weeks could be charged with a Class B felony punishable by 5 to 15 years in prison. The bill, passed in both General Assembly chambers the week before after debate and protest, does not have exceptions for victims of rape or incest, but does have an exclusion for cases of medical emergencies.^[39]

Coronavirus pandemic

As of March 13, 2020, Parson had announced the first two known cases of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Missouri: one in St. Louis, one in Springfield, and both in self-quarantine. Parson said his administration had received \$13 million in federal aid to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and that of every test taken for the virus, only those two were positive. He said there were no cases of the virus spreading in Missouri.^{[40][41]} On March 17, he announced that Missouri had grown to 15 confirmed cases.^[42] Parson said that the state would soon expand to 10,000 tests per day by April 1, and would

look into more protective measures for law enforcement and firefighters.^[43] Parson said that his declaration of a state of emergency in Missouri freed \$7 million in funding to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite risks over the infectivity of the coronavirus, Parson left the decision to close schools up to school districts.^[44] Following similar actions by the Governor of Kansas, Parson announced that, effective 12:00 a.m. March 17, all casinos in Missouri would close. He made this announcement after consultation with the Chairman of the Missouri Gaming Commission.^[45] On March 21, Parson announced a new response plan to the coronavirus crisis, one precaution of which banned gatherings of more than 10 people in Missouri.^[46] The plan was set to move into effect at midnight on March 23 and end at midnight on April 6. The plan also banned dining in restaurants, preferring take-out and drive-through.^[47]

After declining to close down Missouri, and denying demands from across the nation and the statewide health industry, while more than 1,500 new cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed in Missouri – one of ten states to remain open during the growing pandemic – and after St. Louis and Kansas City issued strict local stay-at-home orders, Parson issued a general statewide stay-at-home order on April 3 to take effect three days later.^[48] The order was later extended to expire May 3, mirroring a similar extension by Kansas Governor Laura Kelly. Parson simultaneously issued a statewide order closing public schools until the beginning of the new school year in late 2020.^[49] Once the order expired, he delegated responsibility to the counties for enforcing social distancing as the state reopened, comparing the situation to local health departments monitoring restaurants.^[50]

In July 2020, Parson argued for the re-opening of schools.^[51] He said school children "are at the lowest risk possible. And if they do get COVID-19, which they will — and they will when they go to school — they're not going to the hospitals... They're going to go home and they're going to get over it."^[51]

George Floyd protests

In July 2020, Parson proactively pledged to pardon Mark and Patricia McCloskey, a St. Louis couple who pointed guns at unarmed George Floyd protestors walking past their home on a private street, if they were convicted of crimes and if there was no significant change in the facts as they were understood at the time.^{[52][51]}

Medicaid expansion

Parson opposed the ballot initiative on Medicaid expansion.^[53] He argued it would harm the state budget.^[53]

2020 election

After filing to run for his first full term, in the 2020 gubernatorial election, Parson said when asked if he would plan to run for another term in 2024, "I don't see that in my future."^[54] Amid rumors that Parson's predecessor, Eric Greitens, who resigned over multiple scandals in 2018, would attempt to run for Governor of Missouri once again in 2020, Parson's team said they "doubt" the former governor would consider another gubernatorial run. The chairman of Parson's political action committee released a poll to see whether voters would vote for Greitens or Parson in a Republican primary election. The chairman then said, "I don't expect [Greitens] to run."^[55]

Personal life

In 1985 he married his wife, Teresa. They have two children and lived in Bolivar, Missouri.^[4]

Parson endorsed Mitt Romney during the 2012 presidential election and Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential election.^{[56][57]}

Electoral history

Missouri 28th District State Senator Republican Primary 2010					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	<u>Republican</u>	Mike Parson	14,518	47.4%	
	<u>Republican</u>	Larry Wilson	9,590	31.3%	
	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Ed Emery</u>	6,533	21.3%	

Missouri 28th District State Senator General Election 2010					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	<u>Republican</u>	Mike Parson	47,380	83.7%	
	<u>Constitution</u>	Bennie B. Hatfield	9,213	16.3%	

- Unopposed for the 28th District seat in 2014

Missouri Lieutenant Governor Republican Primary 2016 ^[58]					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	<u>Republican</u>	Mike Parson	331,367	51.505%	
	<u>Republican</u>	Bev Randles	282,134	43.852%	
	<u>Republican</u>	AC Dienoff	29,872	4.643%	

Missouri Lieutenant Governor Election 2016 ^[58]					
Party		Candidate	Votes	%	±
	<u>Republican</u>	Mike Parson	1,495,392	52.9%	
	<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Russ Carnahan</u>	1,168,947	42.3%	
	<u>Libertarian</u>	Steven R. Hedrick	69,253	2.5%	
	<u>Green</u>	Jennifer Leach	66,490	2.405%	



Governor Parson's wife and Missouri First Lady, Teresa Parson

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External links

- Office of Missouri Governor (<https://governor.mo.gov/>) official government website
- Mike Parson for Governor (<https://www.mikeparson.com>) official campaign website
- Mike Parson (https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Missouri/Government/Executive/Governor_Michael_L._Parson) at Curlie

Political offices		
Preceded by Charles Simmons	Sheriff of Polk County 1993–2005	Succeeded by Steven Bruce
Preceded by Peter Kinder	Lieutenant Governor of Missouri 2017–2018	Succeeded by Mike Kehoe
Preceded by Eric Greitens	Governor of Missouri 2018–present	Incumbent
Missouri House of Representatives		
Preceded by Ronnie Miller	Member of the Missouri House of Representatives from the 133rd district 2005–2011	Succeeded by Sue Entlicher
Missouri Senate		
Preceded by Delbert Scott	Member of the Missouri Senate from the 28th district 2011–2017	Succeeded by Sandy Crawford
Party political offices		
Preceded by Peter Kinder	Republican nominee for Lieutenant Governor of Missouri 2016	Succeeded by Mike Kehoe
Preceded by Eric Greitens	Republican nominee for Governor of Missouri 2020	Most recent
U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)		
Preceded by Mike Pence <i>as Vice President</i>	Order of Precedence of the United States Within Missouri	Succeeded by Mayor of city in which event is held
		Succeeded by Otherwise Nancy Pelosi <i>as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</i>
Preceded by Janet Mills <i>as Governor of Maine</i>	Order of Precedence of the United States Outside Missouri	Succeeded by Asa Hutchinson <i>as Governor of Arkansas</i>

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